

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 /062 W
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R 042046Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7359
INFO USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3599

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM,NU
SUBJECT: BISHOPS ISSUE STATEMENT

1. LA PRENSA, 3 AUGUST, CARRIES EXCERPTS FROM A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF NICARAGUA DATED 2 AUGUST. THE SIGNATORIES OF THE LETTER ARE THE ARCHBISHOP OF MANAGUA AND ALL THE BISHOPS OF NICARAGUA.

2. THE LETTER SAYS THAT" THE EVENTS OF RECENT MONTHS, SINCE OUR NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, HAVE WIDENED BREECHES WHICH FORETELL FURROWS OF BLOOD. THE ILLS TO WHICH WE TESTIFIED THEN HAVE SPILLED OVER TODAY INTO DIVERSE SECTORS, PREVIOUSLY PASSIVE, OF OUR NATIONAL COMMUNITY. THE GENERAL DISCONTENT OF THE CITIZENRY--AT ALL LEVELS--HAS EXPLODED IN GIANT AND CONTINUED DEMONSTRATIONS, INCLUDING, ABOVE ALL, THE YOUTH, THE MEN OF TOMORROW.....A GROWING WAVE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY (MURDERS, FIRES, LOOTINGS, ROBBERIES, ASSAULTS, THREATS, BOMBINGS) STRANGLES THE COUNTRY IN A SPIRAL OF HATRED AND ANARCHY. INSECURITY AND FEAR, INTO WHICH THE
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ECONOMIC LIFE AND THE TRANQUILITY OF PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS HAVE FALLEN, ARE THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH ALL LEVELS OF THE NATIONAL LIFE BREATHE".

3. "THE LOUD CLAMOR OF OUR PEOPLE IS RAISED OVER AN ABYSS OF POVERTY: THE MARGINAL AREAS OF CITIES AND COUNTRYSIDE, WHERE MALNUTRITION, DISEASE AND IGNORANCE

ARE WIDESPREAD AND, IN ORDER TO REACH A NEW, IDGNIFIED
AND FRATERNAL SOCIETY WHERE JUSTICE REIGNS, DEMANDS
WITHOUT AMBIGUITY THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED
FORCES BASED UPON NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE IMPLANTATION
OF A NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL ORDER.....WE DEMAND WITHOUT
AMBIGUITIES: A NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL ORDER MAKING
POSSIBLE HUMAN CONDITIONS FOR THE MAJORITY OF OUR
PEOPLE, IN THE AREAS OF NUTRITION, HEALTH, EDUCATIO,
HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, LAND, WAGES AND HUMAN RIGHTS.
THE TRUE EXERCISE OF THE FIGHT OFPOLITICAL ASSOCIATION
(OUTSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES), UNIONIZATION AND
ELECTION OF AUTHORITIES. GUARANTEES, WITHIN A
JUDICIAL ORDER INDEPENDENT OF THE POLITICAL POWER,
WHICH WILL PROVIDE A AVENUE FOR CITIZEN CLAIMS.
TRUE STRUCTURAL REFORMS, INTHE TAX, AGRARIAN AND
EMPRESARIAL AUTHORITIES, WHICH REDISTRIBUTE MORE
EQUITABLY THE NATION'S WEALTH, CLOSING THE ENORMOUS
GAP SEPARATING THE FEW RICH FROM THE MANY POOR. A
PROFOUND CAMPAIGN IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, CLEANSING
IT OF VENAL AND INCAPABLE PERSONS. MOR PRUDENT
CONTROL OVER THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, AVOIDING ONEROUS
ENDEBTEDMENT WHICH DOES NOT EVEN FAVOR THE GREAT
MAJORITY. A REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES, BASED
ON NATIONAL INTERESTS (NEITHER FACTIONAL NOR PERSONAL),
WHICH REDUCES.....ITS ABNORMAL BUDGETARY PERCENTAGE.
THE REPEAL OF LAWS AND MACHINATIONS WHICH VIOLATE
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FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF PERSONS OR INSTITUTIONS.
MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF VICE AND CRIME WHICH, AT TIMES,
FINDS PROTECTION IN THE SHADOW OF AUTHORITY. AN END
TO THE VIOLENT REPRESSION WHICH HAS CREATED A CLIMATE
OF TERRIBLE INSECURITY, SHIELDED BY PRETENTIONS OF
NATIONAL SECURITY".

4. THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO QUOTE THE LETTER AS SAYING,
"TODAY THE NATION CRIES OUT FOR RADICAL APPROACHES, NOT
NECESSARILY EXTREMIST, WITH GENEROSITY AND PATRIOTISM,
FREED FROM PERSONAL OR FACTIONAL EGOISM, TO AVOID AN
UNNECESSARY LOSS OF LIFE OR POSSESSIONS....THE DOCTRINE
OF NATIONAL SECURITY--SO FASHIONABLE ON OUR CONTINENT-
WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SLOW THE TIDE OF CLAIMS PRESENTED
BY THE PEOPLE. 'PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE IS A DREAM.'
IT WILL ALSO BE A DREAM TO STOP THE VIOLENCE OF THOSE
WHO, TIRED OF RESORTING TO OTHER MEANS, DEMAND JUSTICE."

5. COMMENT: THIS STRONG STATEMENT, THE FIRST OF ITS
KIND SINCE THE BISHOPS' NEW YEAR'S LETTER (MANAGUA 0459),
SEEMS TO PLACE THE CHURCH SQUARELY ON THE SIDE OF
OPPONENTS OF THE GON. EMB HAS RECEIVED REPORTS VIA

SEVERAL SOURCES THAT ARCHBISHOP RECENTLY HAS BEEN MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS WITH A VIEW TO BOARD FORMULATING SPECIFIC REFORM PROPOSALS. ADDITIONALLY, AT LEAST ONE MIDDLE-LEVEL PLN MEMBER HAS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO HAVE THE ARCHBISHOP MEDIATE "EXCHANGES" BETWEEN PLN AND ALL FACTIONS OF OPPOSITION. THE ARCHBISHOP'S ASSOCIATION WITH THIS LETTER MAY IMPACT UPON THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH MEDIATION BY THE ARCHBISHOP. EMB SEES THE LETTER'S ADVOCACY OF "RADICAL, NOT NECESSARILY EXTREMIST" APPROACHES AS THE CHURCH'S CONCERN OVER THE DIRECTION EVENTS ARE TAKING. THIS CONCERN IS SHARED BY LEADERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION.

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